



City of Tempe

NOTES FROM THE CASE STUDIES MEETINGS

1:30 pm, September 18, 2002
West Side Multi Generational Center

ATTENDANCE:

Darlene Justus, CAC
David K. Jones, Sign Focus Group
Stu Siefer, Designer Focus Group
Dan Tilton, Designer Focus Group
Kevin Moore, Designer Focus Group
Michael Burke, Designer Focus Group
Roger Millar, Otak
Steve Venker, Planning

Patrick Anderson, CAC
Patti King, Sign Focus Group
Mary Ann Miller, CAC
Darin Sender, CAC
Eric Emmert, CAC
Jenny Lucier, Neighborhood
Fred Brittingham, Planning
Grace Kelly, Planning

Grady Gammage, CAC
JayneLewis, Dev. Focus Group
Bill Butler, CAC
Courtney Gilstrap, Focus Group
Todd Marshall, CAC
Scot Siegel, Otak
BonnieRichardson, CD&D

INTRODUCTION - Overview

9th AND WILSON: PRESENTATION OF THREE SCENARIOS

- Why no neighborhood meeting requirement? Small projects that meet height and setbacks do not require a meeting. If height or setbacks are increased, then it will require public meeting at Board of Adjustment.
- Cars backing on to street okay in multi family zoning district? Yes. Under new codes.
- Property was developed prior to city's retention requirements.
- What is the threshold when a project has to go to a hearing? Projects over 10,000 s.f. have to go to a board. Plan 2 would require a PAD and subdivision and go to Planning Commission and Council.
- Are there additional setbacks next to single family if height is increased? Yes.
- Existing courtyard separation standards not workable in these concepts.
- What is the difference between the two plans? Can you do both? The one with one driveway cut is better fit in neighborhood. Not a bunch of garages on street. Plan 2 shows you could do snout house which are not pedestrian friendly which proved that the pedestrian overlay district is needed in that area.
- Do not have the Planning commission give out variances. Call them waivers or something else.

CHECKER SITE: PRESENTATION OF THREE SCENARIOS

- Missed Opportunities.
- Ped Overlay has parking bonus.
- Why access off Hardy instead of University? University is intended to have landscape median with new Transportation Plan so you won't be able to make a left out of Checker.
- How does delivery vehicle get out? Problematic.

- That's the problem with no access on University. If there was an alley, the new codes would propose alley access.
- The proposed codes have been revised, and that's not the case anymore.
- Comprehensive Transportation Plan will eliminate suicide land down middle of University.
- What do smaller towns with Checkers that have smaller sites do? On –street loading.

ALPHA BETA SITE: PRESENTATION OF THREE SCENARIOS

- Can you slide the big box to the west? Yes, you could.

COMMENTS:

- Reality is we don't have the luxury to scrape ground and start over. We have retail developments that are struggling. I was hoping to hear how to help them and hear about compatibility between residential and adjacent commercial. These conceptual plans are a pipe dream.
- What was broken that needed to be fixed? We heard from 150 people that process, CPTED, drainage, parking and signage, were not working.
- Back during discussions of GP2020, old plan discussed development of wide open spaces. Since that is not what we have anymore, we were trying to have them re-examine what we're trying to fix.
- Review of the three case studies was very helpful and interesting. Going forward it would also be helpful to hear what city staff wants to encourage in terms of the overall objectives of the zoning code rewrite. Once these overall objectives are framed, with the underlying rationale, we can better distinguish the impact of the proposed changes to the existing code.
- Couple observations reading through the sign code re-write. 1) It appears that the section allowing for Grand Opening signage has been removed from the latest re-write draft. 2) Both Mary Ann and I are a bit concerned about possible abuse of the Brand Identification Sign section (3-7-227). While we agree, there need to be provisions for such signage, per the Council's request, but as it is written, there may be potential for abuse. While the Chamber appreciates the inclusion of recognizable brand signage, we don't want to see it abused and the city cluttered. We'd be happy to work with you on some language to help tighten this section up. 3) Thank you for the inclusion of Section 3-7-222 regarding Significant Event Signage. The Chamber's only concern is regarding the length of time a sign may be displayed. In our opinion, three days is too little time to communicate a significant event (e.g. change in management, etc.). We recommend 14 days and would be happy to discuss the issue with you further if you have questions.
- Great "Big Picture" approach. I like the flexibility and ability to give a more "urban " feel to parts of Tempe. I like the emphasis on mass transit/pedestrian oriented design. Should concentrate on detail, e.g. architecture, engineering, landscape architecture, interface. How can open space/retention / landscape be developed as quality open space, not just the "left over" space - a metaphorical hole into which all unresolved site issues fair. Look at creative ways of dealing with stormwater run-off, site lighting and landscaping. Each of these issues, has until now, been subject to relatively stiff requirements and solutions end up being "design by numbers" vs. "Good Design". These are all very visible elements that could make or break all the big picture stuff, depending on how they are addressed.

- My overall impression of the zoning re-write effort thus far is that it is in many respects focused on creating a more flexible and perhaps liberal set of rules in order to allow a more creative, vitalized and ultimately more efficient land use. I believe this to be a very good purpose. With that purpose in mind, I believe that one of the most important steps that could be taken at this time would be a rethinking of the Development Review role and process. My experience over the past several years is that the existing Development Review process has been steadily shifted more and more toward the end of the design process in an effort to take on an ever increasing amount of the minutia of project design. I have been in practice long enough to remember the days when Development/Design Review was the first item on our agenda once a Schematic Design was in hand.

This unrelenting shift in focus is to the detriment of nurturing good environmental design, since the most important design decisions occur in the beginning of the process. For example, in the case of a small R-3 lot that is being redeveloped for higher density, it is much more important to get the general layout of the site plan and building proportioning right than it is to get the best exterior colors, or light fixture selection, or plant palette & density perfected. These days, in order to get a project before Development Review, nearly every conceivable detail of the design has to be complete, and at that stage the conceptual decisions are a foregone conclusion. Development Review is essentially taken out of the critical concept forming process. More flexible and liberal zoning makes it all the more imperative that Development Review occur early in the design process and be sharply focused on the most important goals of the general plan. Admittedly, it is a fact of life that details are more easily dealt with than concepts, but without a concerted effort to overcome this propensity, the value of the Development Review process in achieving community goals will continue to decrease while the time consumed by all involved in this less-meaningful effort will steadily increase.

I sincerely hope that the zoning re-write effort will give this issue serious consideration and find a way for Development Review to increase its relevance in the most critical issues design. It is essential that the timing and purview of Development Review be restructured away from minutia and toward priorities based upon the very best and most elusive goals of good community development.